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Middlebury College Bulletin

MAY, 1932, MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT

Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

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MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE BULLETIN

Vol. XXVI

May, 1932

No. 9

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The Bread Loaf

Writers' Conference

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Published by Middlebury College

· Monthly from September to June ·

at Middlebury, Vermont

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE PRESS

W. STORRS LEE, *Editor*

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Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office  
Middlebury, Vt., under Act of Congress  
August 24, 1912

# Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

*Conducted by*

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

At Bread Loaf Inn

*August 17---September 1, 1932*

THEODORE MORRISON, *Director*

*Staff:*

MARGARET WIDDEMER  
WALTER PRICHARD EATON  
ROBERT HILLYER  
BERNARD DE VOTO  
LEE WILSON DODD  
GORHAM B. MUNSON

*Visiting Speakers:*

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER  
JOHN FARRAR  
JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH  
EDWARD WEEKS  
ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

EXPERT guidance in literary problems for those interested in writing either as a profession or as a means of personal satisfaction and development is offered in the seventh annual session of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, to be conducted from August 17 to September 1 at Bread Loaf Inn.

The Writers' Conference began its career in 1926. The plan owes its origin to John Farrar, formerly editor of the *Bookman*, now vice-president of Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., Publishers. It was Mr. Farrar's conviction that many writers, especially young writers, are at a loss for criticism and advice that shall be at once honest and friendly. To meet the needs of men and women seeking such advice, Mr. Farrar founded the Writers' Conference and directed its first three sessions. Its usefulness proved such that it rapidly became an established institution.

Often writers fall short of success merely for lack of professional information which an experienced man or

woman of letters could give them in a brief interview. Sometimes the writer's aims are frustrated by misguided effort. An impersonal but kindly critic can often detect immediately wherein a piece of work submitted to him is at fault—whether in want of technical proficiency, command of style, imagination or power of ideas, or choice of subject matter. The critic may see, for example, that the work offered to him shows need of drill in the elements of composition, or that its form is unsuited to its subject, or that the writer has not been profiting as he might by his own experience. Or it may become evident that the writer has mistaken his talents, and should attempt some different form of literary expression. Often what is needed is only encouragement and guidance in continuing on a path well begun.

That advice of this kind, given directly and personally, can be truly helpful and can show its effect in practical results, the previous sessions of the Conference have clearly established. Those who have charge of the work well understand that it is impossible to teach anyone to write who is fundamentally without aptitude; but most people, and most writers among them, are more capable than they suspect of learning and of profiting by guidance. It is hoped that at Bread Loaf, in an atmosphere of friendliness and immediate contact with a group of writers and critics who have achieved a considerable measure of success, the terms "honest criticism" and "friendly advice" are given their fullest meaning.

## *The Program*

The program will consist first of all of background talks by members of the staff on the prominent varieties of writing—the novel, the short story, the essay, the article,



plays, verse, and criticism. Practical suggestions on the use of experience in writing will be included, and also suggestions on the mastery of prose style. In addition to these background talks by members of the staff, round-table discussions will be held on topics important or interesting to writers; both practical and purely literary problems will be considered. The general talks by staff members and the round-table discussions will be conducted informally; those who attend the Conference will be expected to ask questions and to contribute their own ideas and experiences to the discussion of critical principles and technical methods.

As perhaps the most valuable of all the features of the work, an opportunity will be given to each member of the Conference to discuss his own individual problems and his own actual work with one or more of the experienced authors and critics on the staff. For this purpose, all who attend the Conference are urged to bring examples of their writing. The only stipulation is that every manuscript must be clearly typed.

Finally, visiting authors, critics, and editors of importance will come to Bread Loaf to address the Conference on subjects of interest to everyone concerned with writing.

Thus the daily work at Bread Loaf will consist of four main parts. In the morning, the members of the staff will give their background talks on the general forms of writing, the novel, the essay, verse, plays, and the like. In the afternoon, the round-table discussions will be held. In the evening, a visiting speaker or a member of the staff will discuss some larger aspect of letters or the theatre, or will give a reading. And at assigned times, each member of the Conference will be given a personal interview with a member of the staff for the actual discussion and criticism of manuscript and of individual problems.

Everyone who attends the Conference, at the time of his arrival at Bread Loaf, will be advised by the Director what member of the staff to consult personally and what talks and conferences are likely to prove most profitable to him. Attendance at all the work of the Conference is entirely optional.

## The Staff

The staff of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference is a body of experienced authors whose work offers examples of nearly every imaginable kind of literary expression. The background talks given by the staff will necessarily deal for the most part with the more prominent forms of writing such as the novel, short story, and the like, although a large amount of flexibility is encouraged in these talks. But the actual literary work of the staff members includes not only the types of writing already mentioned in this pamphlet, but biography, journalism, humorous verse, parodies, stories for children, musical criticism, and much besides. We venture to say that the special interest of every member of the Conference will in all probability have fallen within the experience of some member of such a widely representative staff.

The Director of the Conference is Theodore Morrison, author of *The Serpent in the Cloud*, a narrative poem, and of verse, essays, and reviews in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Saturday Review*, *The New Adelphi*, and other magazines. Mr. Morrison was formerly assistant editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, and is now an instructor and tutor in English at Harvard University. His considerable experience as writer, editor, and teacher has given him wide familiarity with literary problems and with the needs of those in search of literary guidance.

Besides the Director, the regular members of the staff who will be at Bread Loaf throughout the period of the Conference are:

Margaret Widdemer  
Walter Prichard Eaton  
Robert Hillyer  
Bernard De Voto  
Lee Wilson Dodd  
Gorham B. Munson

Margaret Widdemer is widely and delightfully known as novelist, poet, and lecturer. Among the many volumes of which she is the author are *The Haunted Hour*, *Ballads and Lyrics*, *Old Road to Paradise*, and *Rhinestones*. During the present year she has brought out a new volume of poems, *The Road to Downderry*, and a new novel, *Pre-War Lady*.

Walter Prichard Eaton, secretary of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, is an author and lecturer whose variety of accomplishments almost eludes classification. He is a dramatic critic and an authority on the theatre, a delightful essayist, a writer of books for boys; he has been a practical journalist, a music critic, and has published a volume of poems. Among his many volumes are *Green Trails and Upland Pastures*, *Echoes and Realities* (verse), *Penguin Persons and Peppermints*, *The Actor's Heritage*, *Drama in English*, and *Everybody's Garden*.

Robert Hillyer has won a place of honor in contemporary American poetry by his established mastery of form and beauty of expression. Of his nine volumes of poems and poetic translations, the last three are especially noteworthy, *The Halt in the Garden*, *The Seventh Hill*, *The Gates of the Compass*. Mr. Hillyer has acted as president of the New England Poetry Society. He is an associate professor



of English in Harvard University, where he gives an advanced course in English composition and a course in the history and principles of English versification.

Bernard De Voto has brought to the writing of novels, short stories, and articles a lively pen, an extensive knowledge of American history and literature, and wide practical experience. His stories and articles in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's*, and other magazines, have provoked wide comment. His novels, *The Crooked Mile*, *The Chariot of Fire*, *The House of Sun-Goes-Down*, are vivid pictures of various phases of American life and history. For the past five years he has been working toward an authoritative study of Mark Twain.

Lee Wilson Dodd is prominent in literary circles as a novelist, short story writer, and critic. He has written and produced a number of plays, of which the most successful were his dramatization of *Bunker Bean*, a novel by Harry Leon Wilson, and his original comedy, *The Change-lings*, produced by the late Henry Miller in 1922-23. He has published three novels, *The Book of Susan*, *Lilia Chenowroth*, and *The Girl Next Door*, and a story for children, *The Sly Giraffe*. He has also brought out *The Golden Complex*, an extended satirical essay on the inferiority complex. Mr. Dodd has written essays and criticism for *The Yale Review* and other magazines, and has been an active contributor to *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

Gorham B. Munson has had wide experience as biographer, critic, and magazine editor. In recent years he has also become known for his lecture courses at the New School for Social Research in New York. His magazine experience includes his work as founder and editor of *Secession*, and as contributor to the *Bookman*, *Dial*, *New Republic*, *Little Review*, *Criterion*, and others. He is the author of *Waldo Frank: A Study*; *Robert Frost: A Study*



*in Sensibility and Good Sense; Destinations; Style and Form in American Prose; and The Dilemma of the Liberated.* He is now acting as American representative of the *New English Weekly*.

In addition to these regular members of the staff, it is expected that Cornelia Meigs will be available for conferences with those especially interested in writing for children. Miss Meigs in 1927 won the Beacon Hill Bookshelf prize contest with her story *The Trade Wind*. Other books for young people of which she is author include *The Wonderful Locomotive*, *The Pool of Stars*, and *Master Simon's Apple Tree*.

### Visiting Speakers

The Writers' Conference has been fortunate in the number of eminent authors, publishers, and critics who have spoken at Bread Loaf as visitors. This year our speakers from outside will include Dorothy Canfield Fisher, John Farrar, Joseph Wood Krutch, Edward Weeks, and Archibald MacLeish.

Mrs. Fisher, one of the most widely known women of letters in America, was one of an interested group of literary people, including Robert Frost, who gave the Conference their support when it was organized. Her own published work has been of great variety, but such novels as *The Bent Twig*, *The Brimming Cup*, and *Her Son's Wife* have established her claim to high regard in fiction. In 1921 Mrs. Fisher translated from the Italian Papini's *Life of Christ*. In recent years her position as one of the board of judges of the Book of the Month Club has given her an extraordinary opportunity to become acquainted with the taste of the American reading public.

John Farrar, formerly editor of the *Bookman*, now vice-president of Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., Publishers, was the founder of the Writers' Conference.

Joseph Wood Krutch is a distinguished and thoughtful critic not only of literature, but of ideas and of the modern age. He has served as dramatic critic and associate editor of the *Nation*. He has brought out an edition of the plays of William Congreve, and is the author of such significant volumes as *Comedy and Conscience After the Restoration*, *Edgar Allen Poe—A Study in Genius*, and *The Modern Temper*.

Edward Weeks is editor of the Atlantic Monthly Press, a lecturer, and author of widely discussed articles.

Archibald MacLeish is a distinguished American poet whose volumes include *The Pot of Earth*, *Streets in the Moon*, *Nobodaddy*, *New Found Land*, and a narrative poem published during the present year, *Conquistador*.

## The Location

The Writers' Conference is housed in Bread Loaf Inn, so called because it is situated near Bread Loaf Mountain. It is a picturesque old hotel in one of the most beautiful sections of the Green Mountains, on the border of the great Battell Forest of over 30,000 acres of unbroken woodland. The Inn and cottages form a community high up in the mountains, far from any village, insuring quiet and seclusion, but easily accessible over good automobile roads.

## Recreation

The region about Bread Loaf offers unusual opportunities for outdoor recreation. Tennis, horseback-riding, hikes over the Long Trail, swimming at Lake Dunmore,

and golf at Middlebury and Brandon will enable students to combine recreation with work in a delightful manner.

## Registration

Admission to the Conference involves no specific qualifications, but is subject to the approval of the Director. Application blanks will be sent upon request. Address all correspondence, except correspondence concerning rooms, to Assistant Dean H. G. Owen, Storrs Avenue, Middlebury, Vermont. Correspondence concerning rooms should be conducted with Mrs. Pamela Powell, Secretary of the Summer Session, Middlebury, Vermont.

A charge of \$125 covers cost of tuition and board at Bread Loaf for the period of the Conference, and all incidental expenses of registration except room rent. The Conference begins with the noon meal on August 17 and ends after breakfast September 1. Bread Loaf Inn, the home of the Conference, is situated twelve miles from Middlebury. Free transportation will be furnished from Middlebury to Bread Loaf on August 17 and from Bread Loaf to Middlebury on September 1, but free transportation cannot be provided except on the dates mentioned.

Rooms may be had from \$8 to \$42 for the period of the Conference. Further information will be furnished by Mrs. Powell. A \$20 fee, applicable to the charge for board and tuition, must be deposited with Mrs. Powell on or before August 1 in order to secure accommodations. Because of the shortness of the Conference and the expense of conducting it, no refunds may be granted. Nor may students enroll for less than the entire session. Payment for room, tuition and board must be made at the time of registration *in the form of travelers checks.*

